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THE BASIC SPIRIT OF CHINESE CULTURE AND NATIONAL FAITH

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1. RELATION BETWEEN HEAVEN AND MAN

The Chinese National Faith has been based on the *Integration among Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism*. This national faith has witnessed Chinese as a unified nation in her strenuous survival and development to the status quo of which Confucianism is seen as the mainstay while Taoism and Chinese Buddhism as branches of Chinese national faith system. All the three traditions in Chinese faith system do not hold personal God as their key sacred concept sustaining their belief respectively. Instead they all propose that the relation between *Heaven* as nature and Man as naturally evolved being is invariably sacred defying all other secular relations. This sacred relation is traditionally termed as the *Integration between Heaven and Man*. According to Confucian faith, *Heaven* is origin of all lives in the universe, constituting the moral archetype of human morality and the ultimate realization of human lives. Hence, *Heaven* has been bestowed by Confucian, Taoist and Chinese Buddhist thinkers with supreme holy features, being different only in different descriptive terms as in Confucian *Heaven*, Taoist *Tao* and Buddhist *Buddha nature*. Since

Heaven is believed as the origin of all lives and sources of all moral values, its extension is cherished as Fate, Mandate, Value, Nature, Reason, Law-giver and Savior. All in all, whatever values God has in the western tradition has all been bestowed to Chinese *Heaven*, besides, it has some features peculiar only to itself, that is, the intimacy and identification between *Heaven* and Man. Yet, if we believe these peculiar features to be of faith and religiosity, it must be universal in its quality. Then could it be self-contradictory between being peculiar and universal? Definitely not. In the perspective of China's geographic situation, what we know China now being historically thought as the whole universe, acknowledged as *under Heaven* where the northern tip is separated by great desert, southern tip by tropical forest, western tip by high mountains and eastern tip by Eastern China Sea. This naturally protected area was thought to be holy blessed universe *under Heaven*, and all values generated from this holy geographic situation are equally thought to be universal despite the fact that they are now being realized only to be peculiar to Chinese nation. Therefore we regard these faith values peculiar to Chinese as universal in terms of Chinese motivation and sentiment.

That is why all religious values of Chinese faith are thought to be universally correct. In the motivation and sentiment of Chinese ancient scholars, all the values of their faith were generated as to be harmonious with what *Heaven* orders absolutely for all beings *under Heaven*. As such, these values are universally sacred. Such a geographic and religious tradition gives Chinese all the reason and feeling to believe what the *Classic Poetry*, one of the earliest Confucian *Five Classics*, describes as "All beings *under Heaven* are given lives by *Heaven*, All beings *under Heaven* are given laws by *Heaven*". And this belief is further described by the *Classic Book*, another one of the earliest Confucian *Five Classics*, as "*Heaven* also blesses his people by nominating their kings and teachers". These classic statements clearly indicate that all beings under the *Heaven* and on the *Earth* are the gifts of *Heaven* in the form of natural evolution, and as such *Heaven* is always blessing them in selecting and sending political leaders for their social affairs and teachers for their moral affairs. In this faith system, both political leaders and teachers must follow the good will of *Heaven* loving their people as much as *Heaven* gave them lives. The good will of *Heaven* is much the same as the biological ancestor bears lives to their offspring. So the Confucian tradition has it that such sacred good will should be harbored as national faith which is termed as *Worship of Heaven and Ancestor for Lives' Reason*. Logically the worship of this kind is *Carry out Heaven Holy Mandate by Each Person*, hence constituting the combination between religious sentiment and secular endeavor of man to cherish lives, family ties, social morality and universal love.

2. BASE SACRED FAITH ON FAMILY TIES

Since all beings including human being are the results of evolution of the good will of *Heaven*, Man must be grateful to *Heaven* for his life; this is well believed as *Gratitude to Life*. Hence the Confucian tradition firmly hold that this *Gratitude to Life* is universally applicable to all secular beings *under Heaven*, so it must be abided by as universal moral law, which is clearly stated as *In the crystal universe, the law of Heaven is glaringly visible*. But as we relate to human in his individuality, the immediate and frequent experience and feeling comes most dear in family ties, that is a son got his life from his father, who carries the biological bond from his ancestor, who then in the final context from *Heaven* as the origin of life. In this logical context, man's life might be secular, but if he projects his life to the family ties and traces it back to its earliest origin, he inevitably links this secularity to the sacredness of *Heaven*. So the "family ties" is the very base by which man can identify himself with the sacredness of *Heaven*. The immediate family life from your parents can very comfortably lead you to your ancestor and *Heaven*, from parental blood feeling to history of genealogy, and finally to holiness of *Heaven*. That is the very reason why every man should worship his ancestor together with *Heaven*, believing that his ancestor's soul has already ascended to *Heaven*, thus inviting his ancestor's blessing from *Heaven*. In this understanding, family ties is the mediator between man and *Heaven* in the principle of life bearing and blessing, by which sacredness of *Heaven* frequents each family member when he esteems and cherishes his parents' devotion and love for his own life, and he carries on the same family mission to the children of his own. So by performing religious rituals to worship *Heaven* and ancestor, Confucian scholars affirm that everything obtains its being from *Heaven*, and every human being obtains his life from his ancestor who his from *Heaven*. Although this affirmation may not be necessarily agree with biology and archaeology, yet it agrees with the family ties, sentimentally and psychologically. This family ties testifies to the value of each individual life and fulfills the kinship in its sacred sense. The forefather of Chinese history scholar Sima Qian once concluded that *Heaven is the beginning of Man, while father and mother are the source of human life. Emotionally when man is thrown at the end of his power and wit he will invariably trace back to his beginning and source for psychological comfort. So we intuitionally shout out for Heaven when we are stuck out of a sudden, we cry out for parent when we are hurt physically to the extreme.* His observation also hints at the sacred function of family ties in transforming human physical trouble into spiritual peace. Therefore Confucian scholars always stress the kinship as the paramount principle of all lives by which family ties is also the one between *Heaven* and Man.

3. KINSHIP EXPANDED FROM FAMILY TO COUNTRY AND ECOLOGICAL WORLD

To Confucian tradition, family is the basic unit of the existence and continuation of life, while the country and society is the family of an expanded model, all of them being the consequence of *Heaven* in its evolution. In this clue, the sentiment and worship a man has for *Heaven*, is much the same as he should have for family, country, society and ecological world, since they are all the platforms and sources of human life. From the scope of immediate experience and physically felt credibility, family could be the best place to testify to the sacredness and value *Heaven* exhibits in secular lives. When western people have it that religion is the national incubator for their morality, they believe that church is a kind of *family* that God shares sacredness with his believers. In Chinese tradition, the *tender love of parents to their children and grateful love of children to their parents*, this sentiment and value are identical to those of *Heaven*, both constituting the absolute universality. This mundane ethics abided by in the Chinese family is identical to the holy principle of *Heaven*, so every Chinese family can be a western church in terms of nursing sacred love. People would wonder how Chinese nation could survive vigorously for thousands of years with her largest world population without equally populated churches as in the West? The reasonable answer could be that every family has been performing as church relating human ordinary lives to the sacred mandate of *Heaven*. So the value nursed at family should be consequently expanded to country, society and universe. In the perspective of country, the sacred principle goes that as leaders should love and care for their subordinate civilians, similarly parents should love and care for their children, while ordinary civilian should respect their leaders as children their parents. Also in the biological world or simply in the universe, every being should follow the principle of parent and children and brothers and sisters, loving each other, respecting each other, and being friends to each other. That is what Mencius declares "Love your family members in order to expand that love to people in society, and from loving people in society you know how to expand that love to all beings under *Heaven*". This universal yet religious love generated from family experience is the mainstay faith of Chinese nation, which is represented idealistically by the Confucian motto "to integrate a family, to administer a country and to harmonize the universe". In their faith such statements as All Beings under *Heaven* are of the same origin and hence of equal value. All beings under *Heaven* are just the intimate members of one big family, so China should be endeared and self-cherished as one person, Love in the family should be transformed into devotion to country. Government officials should devote to their country as children to their parent. All people under *Heaven* are just my brothers and sisters, and all beings are just like our human beings. Integration between *Heaven* and Man. These convictions of religious universality are the expression of the equal

value between being secular and sacred. That is how Chinese could take secular as being sacred and finally reaching universal harmony.

4. SACREDNESS AND INITIATIVE OF HUMAN LIFE

As known to us all, Christian faith is a typical striking contrast between God as the Creator and all the beings in universe as the Creature, the faith principle in this tradition being established by other force. The Creator by virtue of other force than the Creature created the whole universe with human being included with original sin. And this other force of the Creator may also expel his creatures out of their Eden, the Paradise. He could punish his creature by introducing the Deluge to human being or condemn them to hell eternally or save them at doomsday. All these wishes are the miracles of the Creator of his own accord. Creatures are all the more passive before this other force. Logically, faith of this sort is established by the principle of force, that is, belief in God in fear of his punishment. In contrast, Chinese faith is different in its origin, that is, all universal beings including human race are just given birth by the good will of Heaven; they are the outcome of universal evolution instead of any sacred miracle, all beings in the universe partaking the sacredness of Heaven and depending on their respective inner initiative for their lives. The universal evolution of inner initiative of every being has constantly been stressed by *Yijing*, one of the Confucian Five Classics, as "Heaven represents the male principle of the universe while Earth the female one. So Heaven initiates the process of universe, the coordinated movement from the Earth gives birth to everything". This process of universe of lives bears much similarity with babies born in the human family way, demonstrating fully the unity of sacredness of Heaven and secularity of family way of living. That is the very reason why the *Golden Mean*, one of the Confucian Four Books, underlines its first sentence as "The mandate of Heaven is expressed in human nature", which indicates that secular human nature is initiatively bestowed with sacredness of Heaven and this sacred initiative also deeply rooted is the human nature of human being and help him to break away with enabling him to motivate himself, to verify his holy nature, to experience mandate of Heaven and to finally unify himself with Heaven. The faith of Confucian style at this point may liberate believers, and help him to break away with his superstition towards external Sacredness as other force, and encourage him to turn to his inner heart to experience the sacred value of Heaven. Therefore, the Chinese faith tradition does not cherish any blind worship towards other sacred forces than intuitional intelligence; its believers are not seen fanatically seeking after the so-called paradise to the detriment of family, country and ecological world. They often seek the

unification of Heaven from outside and the Intuition from within inner heart, as to see that sacredness of Heaven does not violate the secularity of human intuition at heart. In their religious dialectics, the lost of intuition at heart would instantly invalidate the holiness of Heaven. The individual intuition at human heart allows every believer to evaluate the sacredness of Heaven, to examine the miracle invoker as mountebanks or even curse kings and emperors as universally hated thieves. If the miracle invokers, kings or emperors behave themselves against human intuition, they are equally regarded as harmful to sacredness of Heaven, and should be despised as demon. So leaders at any lever should love their masses as their own children, so does the emperor, son of Heaven, love his subjects, the people of Heaven. If anyone who violates the universal law of loving each other like family members in this universe family, then anyone is simultaneously endowed with sacredness by Heaven to ask out his holy order to oust the violator from his post, even to deprive him of his human qualification. This is what Confucian scholars express as Heaven sees clearly when human eyes see clearly and Heaven hears clearly when human ears hear clearly. Human will see through all the dirty tricks of imposters and will not be cheated by any cooked evidence, just by their intuition and common sense. Finally this respect towards secular life can harmoniously exhibit sacredness of Heaven while co-existing peacefully with social progress in terms of science and democracy.